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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Governor's Task Force on Universal Access to Preschool is part of a broad-based effort to increase the quality of life for all children in Illinois. This report presents the action plan developed by this task force and calls for the creation of Illinois Preschool, a program giving all Illinois families quality preschool options for 3- and 4-year-olds. Part 1 of this report delineates the elements of Illinois Preschool and the activities integral to its success. Part 2 details potential monetary benefits to the state from investing in preschool education. Part 3 describes existing programs serving families with young children, discusses the limitations of the current structure, and describes how the new system will be implemented. Part 4 discusses how quality will be built into Illinois Preschool through a research-driven curriculum and structure, continuity from birth through elementary school, communication with and involvement of parents, teacher and staff education standards, and evaluation for program tracking and improvement. Part 5 discusses making preschool teacher salaries commensurate with those of the local school district, building higher education capacity to train the additional preschool teachers needed, creating incentives and supports for current teachers and administrators, and coordinating professional development and training. Part 6 describes the development of an integrated system stressing collaboration across programs within communities. Part 7 outlines the 5-year implementation of Illinois Preschool, beginning in 2002. Part 8 summarizes budgets for the 5-year period and discusses financing strategies. Part 9 describes the need for a sophisticated campaign to inform parents of choices, prepare providers, spread the program to communities, and build support for

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legislation and funding mechanisms. The report concludes with a list of task force members and other participants and of the regional community forums. (KB)

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Ready Set Grow

ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL

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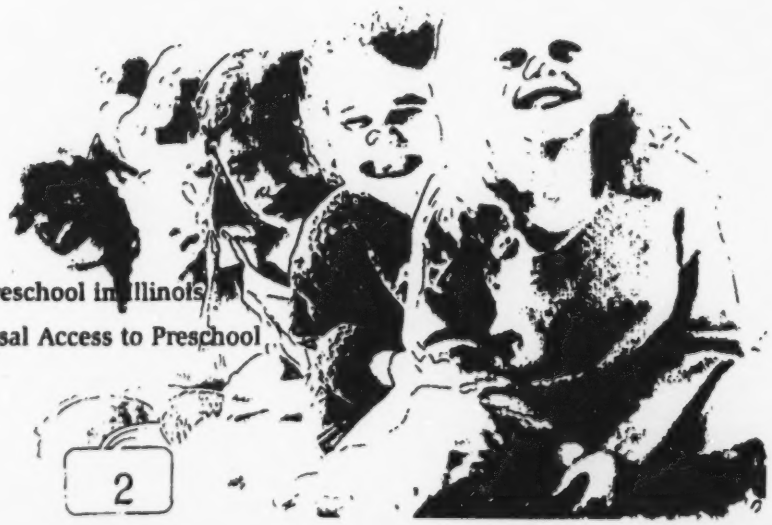

A Framework for Universal Access to Quality Preschool in Illinois

Created by the Governor's Task Force on Universal Access to Preschool

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An action plan from our early education experts and business and government leaders

An incredible amount of work has been done over the past six months to develop this plan, which represents a key strategy for maintaining Illinois' status as a national and global power.

Experts from early education, higher education, business, and government came together and created an action plan, with input from parents and others from throughout Illinois, to provide quality preschool programs for every family that wishes to participate. These programs will prepare our state's children for a more productive experience in school and work. I can think of no better investment that we can make as a state.

The Governor's Task Force on Universal Access to Preschool is part of a broad-based effort in Illinois to increase the quality of life for all children, from birth through their teenage years. This effort, called Futures for Kids, recognizes that children of all ages will benefit tremendously if our society can provide a seamless web of support, from healthy parents and families to good schools, quality health care, and safe communities.

My husband, Governor George H. Ryan, and I thank the Task Force for its work and invite all Illinois residents to join us as we begin to implement this program. It will ensure that our children have the rich learning experiences they need and deserve by the time they enter kindergarten.

Lura Lynn Ryan

First Lady of Illinois
Chair, Futures for Kids

Governor's Task Force on Universal Access to Preschool
Summary of Recommendations

To prepare young children for success in school and to support families as their child's most important teachers, the Task Force recommends creation of an integrated early education and care system that provides families with easy access to services and helps providers maintain stable, high-quality programs.

1. Create the Illinois Preschool program to give all Illinois families a choice of high-quality preschool options that are part of a seamless web of support from the birth of a child into and including elementary school.

2. Begin phasing in Illinois Preschool by:
   - Establishing the Illinois Preschool Council, led by the Governor's Office, to develop the support systems necessary to deliver high-quality early education.
   - Establishing Local Community Collaborations to develop and implement preschool plans that reflect local resources, language, and culture.
   - Rolling out Illinois Preschool in six communities in Fiscal Year 2003.
   - Creating program guidelines, expanding the supply of qualified teachers and staff, designing assessment plans, setting priorities, making necessary regulatory changes, developing financing and capital investment strategies, and building public support.
   - Drafting enabling legislation for introduction in Spring 2003 to make Illinois Preschool a permanent program with a long-term funding stream.

3. Build Illinois Preschool on the strengths of current early care and education resources.
   - Coordinate, improve, and expand current programs serving young children in a variety of settings, from schools to child care centers and family child care homes, Head Start programs, and community organizations.
   - Meet the varied needs of families by offering at least 2.5 hours of affordable, high quality preschool instruction with a certified teacher in the settings that accommodate families' scheduling needs.
   - Provide families with parenting education, family support services, and flexible opportunities for involvement in their children's early learning experiences.
   - Develop Illinois Preschool standards and curricula that are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards and Head Start Performance Standards.
   - Provide smooth transitions from birth-to-three services into preschool, from home into preschool, and from preschool into kindergarten.

4. Build the infrastructure support systems necessary to prepare children for success and to assess program results and quality.
   - Address professional development priorities: 1) building the capacity of the higher education community; 2) creating incentives and supports for teachers and staff who need more education; and 3) coordinating and tracking professional development and training.
   - Provide technical assistance and consultation to programs.
   - Monitor programs for quality assurance.
   - Measure results through a statewide school readiness assessment, teacher assessment; external evaluation, and a multi-year implementation study.

5. Maximize resources and coordination to enhance program quality, expand services, improve children's continuity of education and care, and increase collaboration among programs.
   - Reduce or eliminate regulatory barriers and encourage programs to blend Illinois Preschool funds with other existing funds.
   - Develop financing strategies, fund distribution mechanisms, and partnerships with foundations, businesses, advocacy groups, and parents.
   - Launch a statewide campaign to inform parents of their choices, prepare providers, and spread the program statewide.

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READY
SET
GROW
ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL

Ready Set Grow

Illinois Preschool features five critical elements:

- Professionals in the classroom
- A well-designed curriculum
- Responsive to family needs
- Strong parent involvement
- A two year program

...tional requirements ...
... of local school districts

...estimated 5,000 new ...

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I. INTRODUCTION

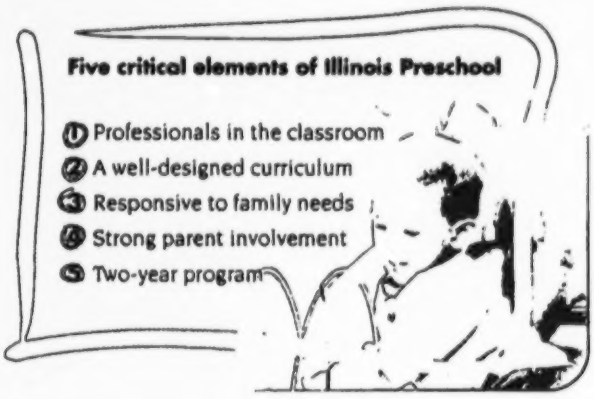
For every child in Illinois, access to quality preschool

Illinois is a national leader in early education as well as a globally competitive business center. But the world does not stand still. To prepare our children for success in school and work, Illinois must do more. One of the best investments we can make is to build partnerships with families to enhance their children's development through high-quality early learning opportunities.

Scientific studies provide strong evidence that the quality of early education plays a critical role in children's capacity for healthy development. Positive stimulation of the brain during the early years creates the foundation for a child's lifelong thinking, attitudes, and behavior. Thirty years of research conclusively correlates quality early education with greater success in school and in work. Yet high quality early education programs—in Illinois and nationwide—are the exception rather than the rule. Surveys and community forums have consistently shown that many parents cannot access or afford quality preschool programs in their communities. Others said they did not know how to find out about such services. Some communities are particularly underserved. In Chicago and in cities and suburbs across the state, for instance, rapid population growth in Latino communities has far outstripped capacity of local programs.

Illinois does better than many states in the nation. It is one of 10 states that account for two-thirds of all funds spent on preschool education. Even so, Illinois educators express concern about the numbers of children who come to school without the social, intellectual, and language skills necessary to benefit fully from the educational system. Parents report that they have few good choices when they search for child care, and thousands of children lack access to programs that provide stimulating, responsive relationships with teachers who, together with parents, help children enter school ready to flourish.

Responding to this research and the needs of Illinois families, the Task Force recommends creation of Illinois Preschool, a program that will give all Illinois families a choice of quality preschool options for their three- and four-year-old children. By coordinating, improving, and expanding existing programs for young children, every community can offer high-quality preschool in a variety of settings, from child care centers to family child care homes, schools, Head Start programs, and community centers.


Five critical elements of Illinois Preschool
1 Professionals in the classroom
2 A well-designed curriculum
3 Responsive to family needs
4 Strong parent involvement
5 Two-year program

Every Illinois Preschool program will provide at least 2.5 hours of high quality education with a certified teacher in the classroom. Each program will meet new Illinois Preschool standards, be evaluated regularly for program quality, and support families as their child's primary teachers. Programs will be affordable to families and will be available in full-day, school-day, and half-day formats as well as school-year and year-round schedules.

This report and a companion volume containing detailed Task Force committee reports provide a framework for making this vision a reality. Success depends on five interlocking activities:

Collaboration – The various programs that now serve young children must be coordinated so that regulations, funding, and learning standards are aligned. They also must be expanded to serve more children.

Professional development – The program will expect high educational qualifications for teachers and preschool staff. This will require the higher education community to expand its course offerings and provide new routes for existing teachers to meet requirements.

Evaluation – Professional assessment of program quality and outcomes for children will be essential for building support and improving programs. Reliable data collection will be built into the program.

Funding – Quality early education is a superb investment, with costs similar to those for elementary school programs. A reliable funding mechanism will be essential for operating costs, and capital investment will be necessary to build and renovate facilities.

Public engagement – A general information campaign will help families choose the type of quality preschool best for their needs. Other efforts will build the support necessary to pass enabling legislation in 2003 and to fully fund Illinois Preschool.

The Task Force was charged with developing a five-year plan, which is presented in this report. In the five years beginning in July 2002 (Fiscal Year 2003), Illinois will

develop the support systems necessary for high-quality preschool and serve about 61,000 children and their families. Infrastructure support needs include producing enough trained teachers, principals, directors, and other program staff; providing technical assistance and consultation to programs; monitoring for quality assurance; and evaluating and measuring results. An additional five years will be required for full implementation, with a projected enrollment of 202,000 children in 2012.

II. A COMPETITIVE EDGE

Quality early education yields wide range of benefits

Overwhelming evidence shows that investments in quality early education create a substantial long-term payoff for the individuals served and the communities where they live. Illinois is fortunate to have a strong base of programs in place. These will be the foundation for Illinois Preschool.

Invest pennies, save dollars

Research in Illinois and across the nation shows that quality early education brings a range of economic and social benefits. Reading ability, cognitive skills, and college enrollment were among the gains documented in the landmark Abecedarian study, which compared progress of low-income children from a high-quality preschool with that of children who had not attended. Other positive effects included fewer instances of grade retention, decreased need for special education, and delayed parenthood.

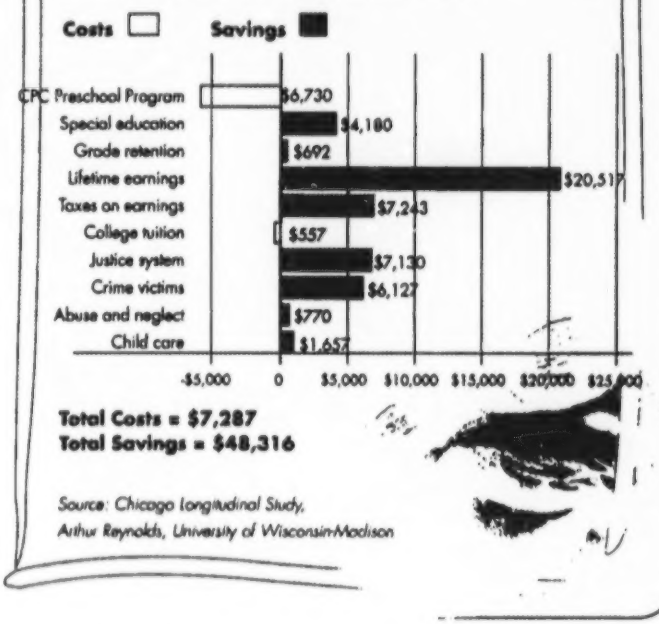
Another benchmark study, of the High/Scope Perry Preschool, estimated that every $1 invested in quality preschool resulted in $7.16 in benefits. Rutgers University economist Steven Barnett estimated that participation in that program resulted in $150,000 per participant in savings from reduced crime. A RAND Corporation study of that same program found that the savings to government alone, in reduced costs of crime, welfare, and remedial education, amounted to twice the program's costs.

In Illinois, the majority of students who enter the State Prekindergarten Program For Children At Risk of Academic Failure show consistent performance at the average or above-average level throughout elementary school—despite their previous at-risk status.

A longitudinal study of 1,500 children who had attended Chicago Child-Parent Centers found that those children performed better in school, had lower rates of juvenile arrest, and higher rates of high school completion. Parents of these children showed higher levels of school involvement, higher expectations, and more satisfaction with their children's education. The cost-benefit ratio in this study was similar to that of the Perry study: for every dollar spent, $7.10 was returned to the government, the public, and the participants themselves.

Preschool's big benefits

A study of Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) found that every dollar invested brought more than $7 in benefits. The preschool experience created savings in every area but one: college costs, because more students ended up going to college.



Source: Chicago Longitudinal Study, Arthur Reynolds, University of Wisconsin-Madison

A payoff for Illinois

These cost-benefit ratios represent a potential payoff to Illinois of $3.3 billion if Illinois Preschool serves 60 percent of four-year-olds and 50 percent of three-year-olds, as projected in this report. Even if the increased lifetime earnings of the participants are excluded, monetary savings to government and crime victims amount to $1.8 billion.

Businesses also recognize the value of quality early education. Illinois business leaders have repeatedly called for high-quality programs for children because they will create a far more productive future workforce. There is a short-term benefit as well: parents now in the workforce are more comfortable—and thus more productive at work—when they know that their young children are receiving quality education and care.

While there are clear benefits of quality education at all age levels, Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman of the University of Chicago concludes that the greatest return on investment comes from high-quality programs that serve the very young, because early learning and early success set the stage for sustained long-term payoffs, first as individuals enter school and later in the labor market.

Family Child Care Home

Head Start

Preschool Special Ed

State Pre-K

Non profit and for profit
Child Care Centers

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Foundation already in place

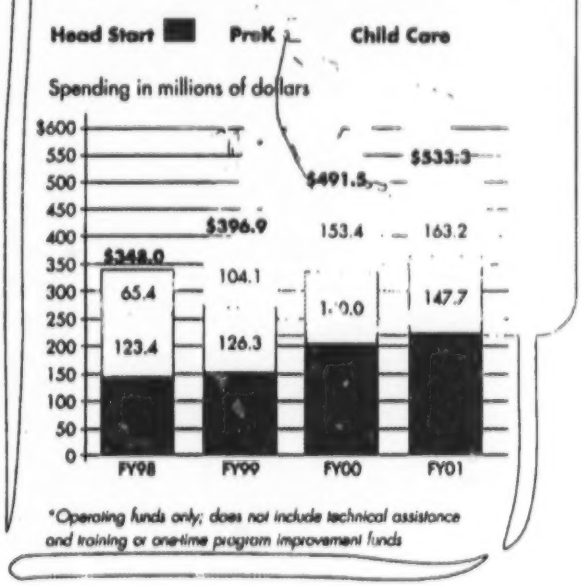
Recognizing these benefits and the need to remain globally competitive, a number of states are dramatically expanding their early education programs. Illinois is among the leaders. Along with New York, Georgia, Ohio, North Carolina, California, and other states, Illinois has dedicated substantial funding over the past decade to improve the quality and availability of early education for its children.

Top-notch programs in Illinois are viable models for providing preschool, but these programs do not reach all communities or families. Far too many Illinois children arrive in kindergarten with too little preparation simply because good programs are not available. This is a social and economic liability that the state must address.

Current public spending to support State Prekindergarten, Head Start, and child care programs serving three- and four-year-olds totaled $533 million in Fiscal Year 2001. This 53 percent increase over the $348 million spent in 1998 reflects the strong support for early education from Governor George H. Ryan and the Illinois Legislature. Studies and surveys conducted for the Task Force found that public support for such investment is also strong. Illinois Preschool is an outgrowth of this legacy and commitment, and a response to the clear need to better prepare Illinois children for school.

Illinois Invests in Children Ages 3-5

Responding to research and the needs of families, Illinois has begun investing in early education and care.



*Operating funds only; does not include technical assistance and training or one-time program improvement funds

III. A BLEND OF PROGRAMS

New system strengthens, expands existing programs

Illinois Preschool builds on the state's existing programs that serve families with young children. Each program has strengths that will help shape Illinois Preschool. Each also has limitations that can be reduced or eliminated through the collaborative structure recommended in this report.

The Illinois system today

Early childhood programs with state support currently serve 133,400 three- and four-year-old children in Illinois, about 36 percent of the total age-group population of 367,000. Because each program is designed around different goals and regulations, there is little consistency in family and provider eligibility, teacher requirements, hours of service, parent fees, and curriculum.

The State Prekindergarten Program serves 55,000 three- and four-year-olds who are identified as at-risk of academic failure. Most classrooms are in public schools and all adhere to high standards regarding the educational program and parent and community involvement. All programs are taught by certified teachers at pay scales commensurate with those of local elementary school teachers. An additional 12,000 children with disabilities or significant delays are served by Preschool Special Education. These Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) programs are restricted to "at-risk" children or those with disabilities, and most are offered only in a half-day format.

The Child Care Program serves about 30,000 three- and four-year-olds in child care centers and licensed family child care homes by providing subsidies to families below certain income levels. This availability of full-day care is very important to working families, but these programs do not require certified teachers nor adherence to educational standards. This program is administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), which also provides subsidies to 25,500 three-and four-year-olds cared for by friends and relatives in license-exempt homes.

Head Start serves 36,400 three- and four-year-olds with a time-proven program of family support, education, and comprehensive services such as health and dental care and social services. All staff, including bus drivers and lunchroom aides, receive specialized training, but certified teachers are not required. Federal regulations restrict the program to very poor families and the vast majority of programs are a half day only. Head Start is funded and regulated by the federal government.

Lack of coordination and regulatory barriers across these programs make it difficult for many working families to find full-day, high-quality services and for providers to maintain stable, quality programs. The current structure also results in service gaps and, at times, inefficient use of tax dollars.

For these reasons, leaders in Illinois and nationwide have advocated more collaboration and fewer regulatory conflicts among early education and care programs. Collaboration across programs has begun in many Illinois communities. Many Head Start and child care providers who operated separately in the past are now working together to make full-day, year-round services available; these programs serve more than 6,000 children in poverty. School districts are increasingly delivering State Prekindergarten services, with certified teachers, to children in child care and Head Start programs, as well as offering before- and after-school care to children in school-based Prekindergarten programs. Some programs share space, staff training, transportation costs, and specialized personnel such as social workers and speech therapists. Others collaborate with family child care providers to bolster the quality of early education.

These types of collaboration will be at the core of the Illinois Preschool structure.

How the new system will work

The Task Force recommends creation of a state-level Illinois Preschool Council, under the direction of the Governor's Office, to further develop the framework outlined here and to begin implementation of Illinois Preschool in Fiscal Year 2003 (beginning in July 2002). The Council should be comprised of representatives from ISBE, IDHS, the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA), Head Start, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Board of Higher Education. It would be guided by an advisory board similar in membership to the Task Force appointed by the Governor.

The Illinois Preschool Council will invite proposals from communities across Illinois that can develop programs that meet these criteria:

Quality standards – Programs will meet new educational or training standards, will use an approved curriculum, offer parent involvement and support services, and have a child-to-staff ratio no higher than 10 to 1 (two staff per 20 children), with a lower ratio for classrooms that include mostly younger children or children with special needs such as language differences, risk factors, and disabilities.

Collaborative structure – Each collaboration will be made up of parents, various preschool providers, schools, and community organizations that have developed services to meet the needs and desires of local families. A written collaboration plan will be required.

Certified teachers – All children will receive at least a half-day educational component (2.5 hours) with an Early Education (Type 04) Certified Teacher.

Assessment and accountability – All programs will participate in regular assessment of child outcomes and program quality, and will be accountable to the Illinois Preschool Council.

Affordability – Families below a certain income level will receive free services; a sliding-scale fee may be charged for families with higher incomes.

Maximize resources to improve quality

To reach all children, especially those with working parents, communities will be required to blend new Illinois Preschool funds with existing program funds—including those from State Prekindergarten, Preschool Special Education, Head Start, Child Care subsidies, parent tuition fees, the USDA Child Care Food Program, and fundraising.

Communities can expand their services in two ways: by converting existing programs into Illinois Preschool programs and by creating new Illinois Preschool programs in any of the eligible community settings.

Combining funds from various sources will maximize the use of existing resources, enhance program quality, expand services, extend the program day, improve children's continuity of education and care, and improve collaboration among programs. In some programs supported by parent fees, Illinois Preschool funds may make it more affordable for families by allowing modest fee reductions.

Quality in a variety of settings

Illinois Preschool can be incorporated into early childhood programs in many ways. For instance:

- A private preschool can upgrade a classroom by offering morning and afternoon Illinois Preschool sessions with certified teachers.
- A Preschool Special Education half-day classroom can integrate children with disabilities and non-disabled children in the same learning environment.
- Head Start or State Prekindergarten half-day programs can use Illinois Preschool funds to serve additional children who do not qualify under current regulations.
- Child care centers and homes can incorporate Illinois Preschool into their extended-day programs for working families, and existing school-day programs can use Illinois Preschool to extend the program day.

Formal outreach efforts to enroll children cared for by friends and relatives will also be encouraged to prepare more young children for kindergarten.

Serving 61,000 children

At the end of five years, Illinois Preschool will be serving about 61,000 children, based on enrollment of 50 percent of three-year-olds and 60 percent of four-year-olds. At full implementation five years later, the program will serve about 202,000 children. That rapid expansion of Illinois Preschool represents a major implementation challenge due to a lack of certified early childhood education teachers, inadequate physical space in some communities, and the costs involved.

IV. BUILDING IN QUALITY

High standards for preschool teachers, curriculum

Illinois Preschool will require high levels of education and professional development for all teachers and staff. Program content will be aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards and Head Start Performance Standards so that children are well prepared when they enter kindergarten. Ongoing assessment will track school readiness trends, program quality, and outcomes for individual children. All programs will support parents in their role as the child's first and most important teachers.

Standards based on research

Families that enroll their children in Illinois Preschool can be confident of program quality. Program design, curricula, support systems, and staffing requirements will reflect what has been learned in recent years from research into brain development and studies of early education programs.

Programs will follow unified standards to ensure quality, but there will be enough flexibility to reflect the unique and diverse characteristics of their communities.

Programs will offer children experiences that promote healthy social, emotional, and language development, physical well-being, and positive approaches toward learning.

What's built into Illinois Preschool

1. Research-driven curriculum and structure
2. Continuity from birth through elementary school
3. Communication with and involvement of parents
4. Teachers and staff meet education standards
5. Evaluation used to track and improve program

Programs will provide parents with parenting education, family support services, and flexible opportunities for involvement in their children's early learning experiences. Teachers will meet with each family before or soon after its child is enrolled, and each program will employ a Parent Resource Coordinator to work with families and staff.

Teacher and staff qualifications

All teachers working in an Illinois Preschool will hold the Early Childhood Education (Type 04) certificate, and all children in the program will be taught by certified teachers for at least a half day (2.5 hours). By 2012, at full implementation, all directors, teachers, assistant teachers, family child care teachers, and parent resource coordinators will meet these requirements for professional education:

Directors or principals will have an Illinois Director's Credential at Level III or the Type 75 (administrator) Certificate, plus experience or background in early education.

Teachers will have a bachelor's degree and Type 04 Early Childhood certification.

Assistant teachers will have at least an Associate's Degree in early childhood education.

Family child care teachers will meet the same qualifications as teachers.

Parent Resource Coordinators will meet standards to be determined by the Illinois Preschool Council.

These requirements will be phased in through 2012 to allow existing staff members sufficient time to take the necessary coursework. Regulations will be created to allow a staff member to continue working in an Illinois Preschool program if that person is taking higher education classes and has a plan on file for completing the necessary coursework.

From birth to elementary school

Illinois Preschool will be designed and implemented as part of a seamless web of support that is available to all Illinois families from the birth of a child into and including elementary school. Abundant research shows that the quality of care by parents and others in a child's first three years of life is critical to future success. Likewise, research shows that continuity of care and education is very important. Children with close relationships to their caregivers and preschool teachers acquire better language and thinking skills, are more sociable, and show fewer behavioral problems. Yet staff turnover in many Illinois child care programs reaches 40 percent every two years, and sporadic attention is given to the transition into preschool and from preschool or child care into kindergarten.

For these reasons, program guidelines and curricula will be aligned as much as possible to provide smoother transitions at all levels: into and out of Illinois Preschool, from birth-to-three services into preschool, from home into preschool, and from preschool to kindergarten. Program content will be aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards and Head Start Performance Standards.

Ongoing evaluation

A comprehensive approach to child assessment and program evaluation will ensure that Illinois Preschool is delivering quality programs and outcomes for chil-

dren. By incorporating these assessment tools, both parents and policy makers will be able to see the benefits of a quality program. Based on reliable, appropriate data, the assessment and evaluation will be:

Age appropriate – Assessments will be developmentally appropriate for very young children. Teachers will record multiple observations of children during everyday activities, rather than relying on formal testing alone.

Aligned with standards – Assessment instruments used by classroom teachers and outside evaluators will align with the Illinois Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

Aligned with curriculum – The assessment instrument chosen by a program will be aligned with the program's own curriculum. All approaches will share as part of their goal the child outcomes in the Illinois Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

Each program will also screen children for disabilities and delays to identify those children who need more intensive evaluation and services.

Four tiers of assessment

Assessment will consist of four tiers serving distinct purposes:

1 **Statewide school readiness assessment** – This study, to be conducted every three years beginning in 2004, will demonstrate system effectiveness and track trends in the readiness of children upon entry into kindergarten. Based on a model developed in North Carolina, it will generate detailed and reliable data on a statewide, representative sample of children who are beginning kindergarten. Comparisons will be made among children with a range of different early childhood experiences and between children at risk and not at risk of school failure.

2 **Ongoing, curriculum-embedded assessment by teachers** – Teachers will be trained to carefully observe each child and will use these assessments to plan learning activities for individual children and for the class as a whole. Teachers will need substantial additional training to develop effective observational assessment skills. The program will analyze children's progress across the program year to identify areas in which the children, on average, are not making expected gains. Training, curriculum revisions, or other changes can then be implemented to improve the program.

3 **Periodic external evaluation** – These evaluations will ensure that independent, objective information is available for both accountability and program-improvement purposes. The Illinois Preschool Council will define the required components of this evaluation and individual programs may add other components. Evaluators will be chosen and engaged by the local program. The first evaluation will take place during the second year of operation, with subsequent evaluations every three to five years.

4 **Implementation study** – This study will describe the evolution of Illinois Preschool and track children's progress from infant-toddler programs into Illinois Preschool and into elementary school. It will help measure the quality of program continuity and whether Illinois Preschool makes a long-term difference in school outcomes. The study results may guide policy decisions, identify best practices, and assist early childhood educators in more effectively preparing children for school.

V. PROFESSIONALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Better pay and career paths to attract, retain talent

Adding 5,000 certified teachers and bringing pay scales and benefits to competitive levels will be critical to successful implementation. Thousands of existing early childhood staff members also will need to achieve higher levels of education to meet new qualifications. A coherent system is needed for initial preparation, ongoing professional development, and career counseling for all preschool staff. The higher education community will play a central role in designing and delivering this education and training.

Higher standards require higher pay

Because more education and training will be required of Illinois Preschool teachers and staff, a significant upward shift in compensation will be necessary for many jobs.

Community-based child care and Head Start programs typically pay their classroom staff from $8 to $12 per hour, compared to State Prekindergarten and elementary teachers who earn $26 or more per hour. Because of the low pay and lack of benefits, many programs suffer from high turnover and experience difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. This in turn lessens program quality and prevents stable teacher-child relationships, which are critical to children's intellectual and social development.

Rather than set a fixed rate of pay statewide, the Task Force recommends that salaries be commensurate with those of the local school district. This rewards early education professionals for achieving higher levels of education or training, while allowing for local variation due to economic differences among regions.

How Illinois Preschool addresses professional development needs

Problem	Solution
Low pay for teachers, staff	• Pay scales commensurate with local school districts
Colleges lack capacity	• Convene Illinois institutions; create "new faculty" grants
Weak articulation from 2- to 4-year programs	• Create regional consortia for smoother transitions
Courses don't reflect expanded roles	• Change course content and formats
Need to upgrade current staff	• Explore alternative certification options • Expand TEACH and Great START programs • Offer flexible financial incentives • Create college-credit opportunities for student teachers
Uncoordinated professional development and training systems	• Establish a career lattice • Create a mentoring system • Integrate and track training • Better coordinate training efforts

Preparing teachers: a big job

The state's higher education infrastructure will require expansion and restructuring to implement Illinois Preschool. At full implementation, 202,000 children will be served. With at least one certified teacher and an assistant teacher instructing a total of 40 children in two half-day classes, a minimum of 5,000 certified teachers will be needed. This number may be closer to 7,000 because some teachers will serve fewer than 40 children. There are currently 1,590 Type 04 certified teachers in the State Prekindergarten program. Most now teaching in child care and Head Start programs do not have Type 04 certification. Also, the majority of existing child care and Head Start directors, teachers, and assistant teachers will require additional coursework or professional development to meet the requirements of Illinois Preschool.

While a span of 10 years is necessary to allow teachers and staff sufficient time to meet qualifications, a much shorter timeframe is indicated for expansion of capacity and course offerings to begin filling the pipeline with qualified teachers and administrators.

The Task Force recommends that the Illinois Preschool Council and its advisory board create an Integrated Professional Development Committee to address the range of issues outlined below, including convening stakeholders at least annually to assess progress and plan for the future. This committee, working with the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education, will provide guidance on articulation issues, faculty development, alternative routes to certification for the current early childhood workforce, attraction and retention of culturally diverse teachers, and changes in student teaching requirements.

There are three priorities: 1) build the capacity of the higher education community, 2) create incentives and supports for teachers and staff who need more education, and 3) coordinate and track professional development and training.

Build higher education capacity

Illinois provides professional preparation of early childhood educators through public and private community colleges and four-year and graduate institutions of higher education. Major expansion of this system is necessary to provide the professional preparation necessary for the Illinois Preschool workforce. This will require high-level work with the administrations of the institutions and their education departments. Suggested starting points are:

Convene a Higher Education Forum in Spring of 2002. This meeting of stakeholders will start the process of expanding capacity through planning and relationship-building across the early care and education sectors, two-year community colleges, and four-year universities.

Offer "new faculty" grants to institutions. Most colleges and universities do not have sufficient full-time faculty to increase enrollment in their early childhood areas. A "New Faculty Initiative" should be launched in Fiscal Year 03 to help universities recruit and prepare qualified faculty members, with special attention to recruitment from minority groups. These

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grants could be awarded to individual institutions or to consortia of two- and four-year institutions. Several rounds of funding might be offered. Grants may need to be over three or more years.

Develop smoother transitions from two- to four-year programs. Many students begin their early education studies at community colleges and complete them at universities, but curricular offerings at those institutions sometimes duplicate rather than complement each other, causing students to repeat common material. A clear articulation from two- to four-year institutions is needed. Grants to regional consortia of two- and four-year institutions could help create models for this articulation.

Develop more appropriate coursework. Coursework changes are needed to reflect the expanded roles of early education professionals, particularly in the areas of using new technologies, promoting healthy social and emotional development, effectively working with families, and working with children from birth to age three. New formats for coursework, such as weekend/evening programs or distance learning, may help bring these courses to more teachers and staff.

Create incentives and supports

Many current early education teachers and administrators are discouraged from pursuing higher qualifications because of a salary structure that does not adequately reflect educational achievement. Illinois has recognized that financial incentives are a proven way to overcome these barriers by establishing TEACH and Great START.

Expand TEACH and Great START. The TEACH program (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) pays up to 80 percent of tuition and book costs for existing child care and Head Start teachers seeking career advancement. TEACH should be expanded to include all early childhood professionals and to support those pursuing a master's degree or the director's credential. The Task Force also recommends expansion of Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers), which provides a wage supplement to licensed child care providers who have attained additional education and who stay in their jobs.

Offer financial incentives. Grants, scholarships, and loan repayment are among the tools needed to help early childhood professionals gain the qualifications needed for Illinois Preschool.

Create college-credit opportunities for student teachers. Current regulations do not permit non-certified teachers who are working toward certification to be paid while student teaching in their place of employment. Opportunities for student teaching should be offered to individuals currently employed in early childhood programs. This includes those with bachelor's degrees and those seeking that degree.

Coordinate and track professional development and training

Early education professionals can access a wide range of professional development and in-service training through resource and referral agencies, Head Start programs, ISBE (including STARnet), professional associations, and human service organizations. The Integrated Professional Development Committee should lead efforts to better coordinate these activities and create a common system of tracking professional advancement.

Establish a "career lattice." A coherent early childhood career lattice, with well-defined core areas of knowledge, roles, requisite qualifications, recommended salary ranges, and career advancement paths, should address current differences in qualifications among early childhood programs.

Create a mentoring system. A professional growth advisor program, such as the one being developed by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, should train at least 20 new advisors per year to help individuals attain their career goals.

Integrate and track training. A statewide registry is needed to formalize and track the training and seminars taken by early childhood professionals so that they qualify for college credit where appropriate, and to monitor each individual's progress on the career lattice.

Coordinate training efforts. Efforts are needed to integrate and more efficiently use training resources across state and federal agencies, professional associations, and other organizations. This might include posting a comprehensive training calendar on the Internet, making training available to all early childhood professionals regardless of program funding source, and jointly planning events and seminars.

All of the above systems should be designed to support the training needs of people who are entering the profession from other fields. Standards for coursework or training are needed for people who have a bachelor's or master's degree in other subjects. Also, strategies should be developed to expand the supply of qualified staff that can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including initiatives specifically designed to recruit, train, and retain Latino staff.

VI. AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Communities shape programs under state guidelines

Today's early childhood programs are often discouraged from working together because of conflicting goals, regulations, and funding approaches. Illinois Preschool offers opportunities to build a more integrated system that stresses collaboration across programs so that each community can better meet the needs of families and make better use of existing resources. An Illinois Preschool Council will set overall guidelines, but each community will design programs to fit its local culture and needs.

Efficiency through integration

Illinois Preschool will be an integrated system that is more efficient than the existing systems with their separate regulatory, administrative, and budgetary structures. It will depend on coordination of state resources among departments and agencies to facilitate and support communities, where a similar coordination of services will be required.

An Illinois Preschool Council should be created by the Governor to engage and include the current leadership of the three primary government systems involved in early childhood programs. In addition to representatives from ISBE, IDHS, DCCA, Head Start, and higher education, the Council should have an advisory board comprised of educators, advocates, providers, higher education and union officials, business leaders, and other representation that mirrors that of the current Task Force.

The Council will be accountable to and provide regular reports to the Governor and the Illinois Legislature. Staff support will come largely from existing agencies. Cross-agency agreement will be required for major policy decisions, with leadership from the Governor's Office. Current early childhood programs directed by ISBE and IDHS will continue.

To begin the rollout of Illinois Preschool, the Council will solicit letters of interest from communities that are prepared to offer Illinois Preschool programs. To apply, communities will be required to develop a broad-based collaboration that includes parents, schools, child care centers, Head Start, Preschool Special Ed, birth-to-three programs, child care networks, and/or community organizations. Any of these groups could be the convening agency.

Functions of the Illinois Preschool Council

- Solicit and approve proposals from communities
- Provide technical assistance to local collaborations
- Define and improve regulations and coordination across programs
- Oversee accountability and evaluation activities
- Set program priorities

Functions of Local Community Collaborations

- Convene local groups and individuals; select lead agency or convener
- Develop and implement plan to offer Illinois Preschool
- Coordinate Illinois Preschool programs with other community services
- Engage in evaluation and assessment efforts
- Educate families about their preschool choices

A community may define itself along boundaries that seem appropriate for that region, including school district, county, municipality, community area, the service area of a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency, or some other boundaries. In turn, the Illinois Preschool Council may require the community to expand or adjust its boundaries and its mix of collaborators to provide broader access or a better balance of services. Boundaries of community collaborations may not overlap; as the rollout proceeds, the Council will ensure that all areas of the state are covered.

Communities define own programs

The program will be administered at the state level but will allow latitude in areas such as curriculum, pay scales, and settings to match local characteristics. Communities will develop and implement plans that reflect local language and cultural factors, and may include a variety of curricula within a cluster to provide, for instance, a Montessori program.

Communities will be required to conduct or analyze local needs assessments to shape their Illinois Preschool programs and coordinate them with other community services such as family support, nutrition, health, and social services.

To encourage this collaboration and sharing of services, the Illinois Preschool Council will seek to diminish or eliminate long-standing policy barriers that have disrupted children's care and collaboration among programs, including differing child and provider eligibility requirements, methods of payment, and parent work and co-payment requirements. The Council and its advisory board will propose regulatory changes as soon as possible to facilitate integration of programs.

Oversight and assistance

The Illinois Preschool Council will oversee the accountability and evaluation activities described in Section IV and will administer a program of technical assistance to strengthen program quality and operations. It will also coordinate an effort in Year 1 to define the further needs for regulatory coordination, and will work with the relevant state and federal agencies to develop appropriate standards.

Also in Year 1, the Council and advisory board will set priorities for program implementation, such as whether the program should first serve communities with higher concentrations of low-income families and how services to children will be phased in within a community.

VII. PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

Five-year rollout of Illinois Preschool begins in 2002

The concepts of Illinois Preschool will be tested in communities across the state starting in 2002. An intensive planning effort that same year will define the steps necessary, including financing and capital improvement strategies, to expand Illinois Preschool statewide. After an initial five-year rollout, an additional five years will be required to reach full implementation and to provide sufficient time for program staff to meet higher educational requirements.

Detailed planning underway

Task Force committees have outlined action steps for moving forward on the many fronts necessary to launch the program. Their recommendations will serve as starting points for additional work, beginning immediately, that will be organized by the Illinois Preschool Council and advisory board.

Year 1 will be dedicated to creating the program guidelines, fostering the first community collaborations, developing financing strategies, designing the assessment plans, beginning the professional development work, making regulatory changes, and building public support.

All of these activities will be used as a base for crafting enabling legislation that will make Illinois Preschool a permanent statewide program with a long-term funding stream. Broad-based support by the public, business community, early care and education providers, and the Illinois Legislature will be necessary before proceeding with the legislative strategy.

VIII. FUNDING ILLINOIS PRESCHOOL

Early costs are modest; long-term strategy needed

Existing programs that serve 133,400 three- and four-year-olds will be the foundation on which Illinois Preschool is built. In the short term, modest resources are needed to support the initial rollout and development of support systems. But substantial long-term funding will be necessary to build out a high-quality statewide system. A facility construction and renovation plan is also needed to build facilities in underserved communities.

Investing in quality

Illinois Preschool at the five-year mark will require new funding of approximately $137 million. A much smaller scale of investment will be sufficient in the first two years. The program can be launched with an initial budget of $5.8 million to 1) roll out the collaboration model in six communities around the state, 2) begin

Conceptual plan for phased implementation of Head Start

Years 1-2 FY03 & 04	Phase 1: Preliminary rollout TEST CONCEPTS AND BUILD SUPPORT SYSTEM
Years 3-4 FY05 & 06	Phase 2: Ramping up BUILD ON LESSONS LEARNED; EXPAND FUNDING
Year 5 FY07	Phase 3: A statewide base PROGRAM MARKS FIVE YEARS; PLANS FOR EXPANSION
Years 6-10 FY08 to 12	Phase 4: Full implementation EVERY CHILD HAS QUALITY PRESCHOOL OPTIONS

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expansion of professional development capabilities, and 3) design and implement the evaluation and oversight components. A Year 2 budget of $14.2 million will double the number of children served, to 6,400 children.

The Task Force recommends that the program proceed in Year 1 with an interim structure that does not require an act of the Illinois Legislature. In the first year, new funding for Illinois Preschool would be available through the ISBE Early Childhood Block Grant and the IDHS Child Care and Development program. The Council and advisory board would work in the first year to test and refine program guidelines and governance structures, build public support, and create a detailed phase-in and financing plan. It would have to address a range of challenges including technical compliance with existing regulations and statutes, methods of fund distribution, and creation of an appropriate governance structure that may include consolidating program administrative functions contained in various state agencies. Enabling legislation could then be drafted for introduction in the spring of 2003.

Projecting the budget

The Task Force and consultants prepared a range of detailed budget projections to estimate the costs of Illinois Preschool under differing scenarios for enrollment, teacher qualifications, and pace of expansion. These options included:

High participation – This option assumed participation of 80 percent of all four-year-olds and 70 percent of all three-year-olds. Total population served at full implementation came to 275,000 children.

Four-year-olds only – This option limited Illinois Preschool to four-year-olds only, at an 80 percent participation rate. It reduced the total number served to 148,000.

School-year only – This option provided only 180 days of programming and did not offer 248 days for working parents who need a full-year program.

Lower staff qualifications – This option reduced the educational requirements for teachers and staff.

The Task Force concluded that each of the above options was not optimal. High participation rates may assume more demand for preschool than exists and require larger budgets. A program only serving four-year-olds is contrary to the research that shows stronger benefits come from two-year preschool programs, and is not compatible with current two-year Prekindergarten and Head Start programs. A school-year-only plan does not meet the needs of most working parents. And lowering staff educational requirements, though less expensive, was not chosen because teaching staff are more effective if they complete more years of formal education and receive early childhood training.

The Task Force recommends a program based on these assumptions:

Operations

- Target population is all three- and four-year-olds in Illinois.
- Projected voluntary participation rate is 50 percent of three-year-olds and 60 percent of four-year-olds.
- Children will be served 248 days per year (full-year) or 180 days (school year), depending on the number of parents in the household and their working status.
- All programs include certified teachers for at least 2.5 hours per day (at full implementation; during phase-in some will be working toward certification).
- The program will be phased in over 10 years with a preliminary rollout in Years 1 and 2 and 61,000 children served by Year 5. Total enrollment at full implementation is 202,000 children.
- Current capacity in schools, Head Start, and child care sites will be used before new slots are developed.

Operations costs – Costs are figured on the *additional expense* of upgrading a program to Illinois Preschool standards. State Prekindergarten programs cost the least to upgrade ($1.70 per child-hour) because they already have certified teachers; Head Start programs follow ($2.97 per child-hour), mainly to upgrade teachers from AA degrees to Type 04 certificates; and child care programs cost the most ($4.72 per child-hour) because of the need to upgrade skills and salaries of most of the staff. Cost estimates include total preschool costs for three- and four-year-olds. Costs would increase by about 10 percent if the Legislature continues to support a set-aside of early education funds for services to families with children under age three.

Support – Five types of support will be required. All except for the capital costs for facilities are included in the budgets that follow.

- **Technical assistance and consultation** on program design, curriculum, assessment, and other issues, with each consultant serving about 20 program sites.
- **Monitoring for quality assurance,** which will be integrated with current monitoring programs to reduce costs and encourage collaboration. Costs are based on the best-practice standard of one regulator for every 50 center-based programs.

- **Improving staff qualifications** involves support to the higher education community to develop its capacity as well as scholarships and incentives to encourage people to upgrade their education.
- **Evaluation** costs are based on providing program evaluation, assessment to inform classroom staff, and child outcomes.
- **Facilities** include renovation and new construction based on the number of new classrooms needed and cost estimates for three regions: Chicago, metro Chicago, and downstate. These costs are not included in the operational budget.

Based on these budgets for the first five years, which may change, an estimate was made for the operational costs at full implementation in 2012. If the program at that point is serving the projected 202,000 children, it will require approximately $468 million per year.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Year 1 (FY03)	
OPERATIONS (six collaborations, 3,216 children served)	
Direct services to children	$3,967,082
Materials and equipment to upgrade classrooms @ $100/child	321,600
Total operations costs	**$4,288,682**
SUPPORT	
Technical assistance and consultation – 1 consultant/1,500 students (new programs only)	$156,233
Monitoring and quality assurance – one regulator per 50 programs	63,773
Classroom assessment materials – $3.86 per student	12,414
Incentive grants to consortia of higher education institutions – 6 @ $25,000	150,000
Faculty development grants – 6 @ $50,000 each	300,000
Financial Support for Continuing Education (TEACH)	400,000
Classroom assessment training (two to three sessions)	24,000
Illinois Preschool Council office	400,000
Total support	**1,506,420**
Total Year 1 costs	**$5,795,103**
Year 2 (FY04)	
OPERATIONS (12 collaborations, 6,432 children served)	
Direct services to children	$7,934,164
Materials and equipment to upgrade classrooms @ $100/child	643,200
Total operations costs	**$8,577,364**
SUPPORT	
Technical assistance and consultation – 1 consultant/1,500 students (new programs only)	$156,233
Monitoring and quality assurance – one regulator per 50 programs	127,547
Classroom assessment materials – $3.86 per student	24,827
Incentive grants to consortia of higher education institutions – 6 @ $25,000	150,000
Faculty development grants – 6 @ $50,000 each	300,000
Financial support for continuing education – teachers and staff	2,200,357
Financial support for continuing education – administrators	1,272,462
Classroom assessment training (two to three sessions)	24,000
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	1,000,000
Illinois Preschool Council office	400,000
Total support costs	**5,655,427**
Total Year 2 costs	**$14,232,791**

BUDGET SUMMARY (continued)

Year 3 (FY05)	
OPERATIONS (20,187 children served, 10% of full participation,)	
Direct services to children	$40,921,415
Materials and equipment to upgrade classrooms @ $100/child	2,018,658
Total operations costs	**$42,940,073**
SUPPORT	
Technical assistance and consultation – 1 consultant/1,500 students (new programs only)	$668,198
Monitoring and quality assurance – one regulator per 50 programs	400,300
Classroom assessment materials - $3.86 per student	77,920
Faculty development grants – 6 @ $50,000 each	300,000
Financial support for continuing education – teachers and staff	2,200,357
Financial support for continuing education – administrators	1,272,462
Classroom assessment training (two to three sessions)	24,000
Illinois Preschool Council office	400,000
Total support costs	**5,343,237**
Total Year 3 costs	**$48,283,310**
Year 4 (FY06)	
OPERATIONS (40,373 children served, 20% of full participation,)	
Direct services to children	$81,842,830
Materials and equipment to upgrade classrooms @ $100/child	4,037,316
Total operations costs	**$85,880,146**
SUPPORT	
Technical assistance and consultation – 1 consultant/1,500 students (new programs only)	$980,664
Monitoring and quality assurance – one regulator per 50 programs	800,600
Classroom assessment materials – $3.86 per student	155,840
Financial support for continuing education – teachers and staff	2,200,357
Financial support for continuing education – administrators	1,272,462
Classroom assessment training (two to three sessions)	24,000
Evaluation	1,000,000
Illinois Preschool Council office	400,000
Total support costs	**6,833,924**
Total Year 4 costs	**$92,714,070**
Year 5 (FY07)	
OPERATIONS (60,560 children served, 30% of full participation,)	
Direct services to children	$122,764,246
Materials and equipment to upgrade classrooms @ $100/child	6,055,974
Total operations costs	**$128,820,220**
SUPPORT	
Technical assistance and consultation – 1 consultant/1,500 students (new programs only)	$980,664
Monitoring and quality assurance – one regulator per 50 programs	1,200,900
Classroom assessment materials – $3.86 per student	233,761
Financial support for continuing education – teachers and staff	2,200,357
Financial support for continuing education – administrators	1,272,462
Classroom assessment training (two to three sessions)	24,000
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	1,000,000
Evaluation	1,000,000
Illinois Preschool Council office	400,000
Total support costs	**8,312,144**
Total Year 5 costs	**$137,132,363**

Financing strategies

Because the long-range costs are substantial, a special Finance Committee of the Council's advisory board should be created in Year 1 to develop financing strategies. The following options are starting points for discussion:

1. **Percent of revenue growth** – Allocate a percentage of anticipated new revenues to early childhood development and Illinois Preschool, without reducing needed increases to other areas of education. Since the first five years of life represent 5/22 of the overall education experience, early childhood programs could receive this proportion of Governor Ryan's commitment of 51% of new revenues that are devoted to education needs. Before the current recession, new revenues were projected at $800 million to $1.2 billion per year.

2. **New revenue source** – Identify a fee or tax that would provide a reliable funding stream that could be dedicated to Illinois Preschool. Though politically difficult, the argument could be made that quality preschool brings a documented long-term payback. California funds preschool with a cigarette tax of 50 cents per pack; Georgia dedicates a portion of lottery revenues.

3. **Reform property tax system** – Preschool funding needs could be addressed as part of comprehensive Illinois property tax reform. The Illinois tax system currently depends largely on the local property tax to fund K through 12 education, which causes problems including inequitable funding for school districts. Many experts have called for shifting the education burden to the income tax; preschool funding could be included in this new tax structure.

4. **School aid funding formula** – The formula used to distribute funds to elementary and high school districts in Illinois could be restructured to include preschool for three- and four-year-olds. Only 3 percent of the Illinois State Board of Education budget is spent on early childhood education, though 35 percent of children under 18 years old are under age six. Implementing this approach would require regulatory changes and substantial new funds to avoid draining funding from existing education programs.

Other financing considerations

Financial support for Illinois Preschool is not just a government responsibility. Partnerships with foundations, business, advocacy groups, and parents should all contribute to development of the program.

Individual businesses and business groups have a strong track record of supporting early education and care initiatives. Many large corporations support on-site and off-site child care programs, resource and referral services, after school programs, and summer camps. Abbott Laboratories has not only opened the largest child care center in the state but gone a step further by providing training funds to raise the skills and professionalism of home-based child care providers in Lake County. Similar corporate support should be sought for Illinois Preschool.

Foundations have also shown steady support for early care and education, with particular interest in quality assessment, professional development, facilities planning and development, and public education. Any financing plan should include efforts to reach local and national foundations.

A final consideration for the financing plan is how funds should be distributed. Options include the competitive model, in which agencies or districts are selected based on the quality of their proposals; geographic, with funds distributed on a regional basis; and needs-based, with more funds serving populations identified as having a high priority.

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IX. BUILDING BROAD SUPPORT

Spreading early education message is step one

Public forums and surveys show a high level of support for the Illinois Preschool concept. Even so, a sophisticated public engagement campaign will be necessary to inform parents of their choices, prepare providers, and spread the program to communities throughout the state. A more focused effort will build support for the legislation and funding mechanisms needed to launch the formal program.

Strong support for quality

More than 2,300 parents, early education staff, and others provided their perspectives to the Task Force through public forums and surveys overseen by the Public Participation and Support Committee. The Task Force also used market research to gauge support for the preschool concepts. All of this research found strong support for building quality into any early education program in Illinois.

The 450 attendees at 16 community forums held throughout Illinois and the 2,100 respondents to the Task Force surveys showed a high level of awareness of the value of quality programs and told of their own priorities, many of which are reflected in the Task Force's recommendations. Residents asked for high quality programs; multiple settings in each community; adequate and equitable funding; local planning and flexibility; responsiveness to local needs such as flexible scheduling and bilingual staff; support for existing programs; and affordable programs.

Respondents recognized that priorities might be necessary to phase in the program, suggesting that the first services might go to lower-income families and communities; four-year-olds rather than three-year-olds; and children with special needs.

Market research, which included focus groups and polling, found very high acceptance that quality learning experiences in the early years have a large impact on school performance, productivity as adults, and crime prevention. Eighty-six percent of Illinois residents agree that state spending on early childhood programs is a good investment.

To launch and then expand Illinois Preschool, "branding" and a clear identity will be essential, as will a wide public engagement campaign that reaches all Illinois communities, including the different groups within those communities. Spanish-language materials and other culturally sensitive approaches will be necessary to build support. Groups that should be recruited into the effort include families, the higher education community, advocacy groups, community agencies, and local public officials.

To begin the process of public education, the Task Force recommends creation of a Public Engagement Committee of the Illinois Preschool Council to better link preschool to birth-to-three services and to elementary schools, develop printed materials, train a cadre of speakers, and create a videotape to bring the Illinois Preschool message to residents around the state.

XI. REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORUMS

The Public Participation & Support Committee conducted 16 forum sessions in 12 locations:

Thursday, 20 September — Sterling/northwestern Illinois

Sterling Coliseum Auditorium, 212 Third Ave., Sterling

Sponsors: State Representative Jerry Mitchell

Saturday, 29 September — Pilsen & Little Village neighborhoods/Chicago's west side

Westside Technical Institute,
2800 S. Western Ave., Chicago

Sponsors: Project Impact ; Chicago Public Schools Office of Language, Cultural and Early Childhood Education; State Senator Tony Munoz; State Representatives Susana Mendoza and Edward Acevedo; and Chicago Alderman Danny Solis

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Tuesday, 2 October — Carterville/southern Illinois
John A. Logan College, Carterville

Sponsor: John A. Logan College Child Care Resource & Referral Program

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Wednesday, 3 October — Rockford/northern Illinois

YWCA, 4990 E. State St., Rockford

Sponsors: Circles of Learning and YWCA Child Care Solutions

Thursday, 4 October — Fairview Heights/Metro East St. Louis area

Ramada Inn, Interstate 64 and Highway 159,
Fairview Heights

Sponsors: Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois, Child Care Resource & Referral Program, Granite City

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Thursday, 4 October — Edgewater & Rogers Park neighborhoods/Chicago's north side

Edgewater Presbyterian Church, 1020 W. Bryn Mawr, Chicago

Sponsors: Early Childhood Network of Edgewater & Rogers Park; Uptown Hull House Head Start; Day Care Action Council of Illinois; Rogers Park Community Council; and the Child Care Network of Evanston

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Tuesday, 9 October — Riverdale/southern suburbs

Early Childhood Center, 150 W. 137th, Riverdale

Sponsors: South Cook Education Consortium and the Early Childhood Center

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Tuesday, 9 October — Englewood neighborhood/ Chicago's south side

Ogden Park Field House, 6500 S. Racine, Chicago

Sponsor: Chicago Public Schools

Wednesday, 10 October — Libertyville/northern suburbs

Condell Hospital Education Center, 700 Garfield Road, Libertyville

Sponsors: Child Care Coalition of Lake County and Condell Day Center for Intergenerational Care

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Thursday, 11 October — Springfield/west-central Illinois

Illinois PTA State Office, 901 S. Spring St., Springfield

Sponsors: Community Child Care Connection and the Illinois Parent-Teacher Association

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Thursday, 11 October — Champaign/east-central Illinois

Illinois Terminal Building, 45 E. University Ave., Champaign

Sponsor: Junior League of Champaign-Urbana

Tuesday, 16 October — Carol Stream/ western suburbs

Carol Stream Village Hall, 501 N. Gary, Carol Stream

Sponsors: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids; the YWCA Child Care Resource & Referral Program; and the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children

X. TASK FORCE MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS

First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan
Chair

Mr. Vince Allocco
Executive Director
El Valor Children's Center

Ms. Brenda Arksey
Child Education & Development
Services Director
Chinese American Service League

Ms. Linda Renee Baker
Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services

Ms. Barbara Bowman
President
Erikson Institute

Ms. Ann Davis
President
Illinois Education Association

Mr. George Davis
Director
Rockford Head Start

Representative Monique Davis
House Democratic Caucus

Mr. Arne Duncan
Chief Executive Officer
Chicago Public Schools

Dr. Marvin Edwards
Superintendent
Elgin District 46

Ms. Jackie Garner
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El Hogar del Nino

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Family Services

Ms. Pam McDonough
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Illinois Department of Commerce and
Community Affairs

Dr. Glenn "Max" McGee
Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education

Ms. Harriet Meyer
President
The Ounce of Prevention Fund

Mr. John Millner
Elmhurst Chief of Police

Representative Jerry Mitchell
House Republican Caucus

Dr. Susie Nall
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Teacher Educators

Sister Catherine Mary Norris
Executive Director
St. Vincent DePaul Center

Mr. Jim Palos
Executive Director
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Mr. George Ranney, Jr.
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